UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farm Security Administration

Washington, D. C.

MIGRATORY FARM LABOR

in

NEW JERSEY

Prepared by

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Labor Division

February, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. W. BRUCE SILVERMASTER

Dear Dr. Silvermaster:

Submitted herewith is a report on "Migratory Farm Labor in New Jersey" indicating the two major areas in the State to which migratory farm workers are attracted for harvesting operations, estimates on the volume of this labor found in each of them, factors governing their employment, steps which should be taken to regulate and control their influx and the method by which their housing, health and sanitary conditions could be improved during their seasonal residence in New Jersey. An effort is made to treat these various aspects of the problem from a broad economic-community viewpoint, rather than from the point of view of a sum-total number of individuals and families whose welfare is reflected in a statistical recital of social-economic categories.

The major portion of the report is devoted to the migratory farm labor problem affecting one of the two major areas studied, i. e., the potato region of central New Jersey, where in August of 1940 the Labor Division conducted a field survey, interviewing over 300 potato workers and 50 farm operators. The emphasis throughout the narrative is placed, therefore, on the conditions found to exist in this region of the State.

The material presented is based upon general observation and interviews with local and State officials as well as on information derived from the responses of the operators and the general remarks of the workers interviewed by our enumerators. The prepared statements and report of the New Jersey Conference of State Departments of Migratory Labor presented before the House of Representatives Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens constitute another source of information for this report but chiefly as a basis for comparing the data therein with our own findings.

The minor portion of the report is devoted to the migratory farm labor problem in southern New Jersey and is based both on our own through thorough reconnaissance work of the undersigned and of Mr. Nelson Grathwohl, formerly of this Division, and on the studies of others, chiefly those of the National Child Labor Committee and the special State legislative committees which investigated labor conditions of migratory workers in 1930 and 1931.

It is to be noted, again, that no quantitative analysis is attempted

ture on wage rates, earnings, relief status, occupational background, place of origin, patterns of migration, size of families, housing, and other data on working and living conditions of the migrants. This material is available from the information collected by our enumerators and recorded on farm wage workers schedules used in our survey last August, but awaits final tabulation before it can be analyzed. After analysis, this material could be incorporated in this report as Part II.

Mr. E. A. Keogh assisted in the preparation of this report by tabulating and summarizing the responses of the farm operators and the general remarks of the workers who were interviewed.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Lowe

Contents

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Two agricultural areas of major importance in the State of New Jersey attract thousands of migratory farm workers to harvest a variety of vegetables, orchard fruits, berries and other small fruit crops. One of these is the comparatively small but concentrated potato growing region composed of parts of Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth counties; the second, is the sprawling and comparatively large area of southern New Jersey devoted to the growing of vegetables, fruits, and berries. The latter area comprises the five counties of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem and Cumberland and the northwestern part of Atlantic County.

Migrants attracted to the potato growing region are chiefly adult Negro males who, for the most part, are unattached, being either single or, if married, have left their wives and families at home. Not more than 15 percent of these migrants are families or part of families. Women and children are found in small numbers among them. About 90 percent of these Negro migratory workers come from the States on the eastern seaboard south of New Jersey; at least 75 percent of them originating in Florida and Virginia. Approximately 40 percent of these migrants are constant year-round crop followers and a substantial proportion of the others have a comparatively long migratory season. Those who come from the deep South make two or more moves to various points up the Atlantic Seaboard following the potato crop along their routes before arriving in New Jersey. Their stay in New Jersey lasts usually from the middle of July to the middle

or end of October. August and September are the peak months of potato harvesting in this region of the State.

Migrant farm workers in southern New Jersey are mostly white, the great majority of them being Italians or of Italian stock. About 90 percent of them come from the Philadelphia-Camden metropolitan areas, a considerable number from Trenton and a smaller proportion from Chester, Pennsylvania, Newark, N. J. and New York City. Appreciable numbers of both Negroes and whites from the South, particularly from Virginia, are attracted also to this area during the long harvest period which lasts from early May to the middle of October. The seasonal peak in this area occurs in July and August.

In contrast to the single or otherwise unattached Negro migrants in the Central Jersey potato region, those in South Jersey consist chiefly of family or semi-family units. Woman and child labor is very common in this area. The National Child Labor Committee found that of the total number of persons in 251 Italian migrant families who were employed in southern New Jersey in 1938, one-half were mothers and older children, 38 percent were children under 16 years of age, and only 12 percent were fathers. The Italian migrants do not seek re-location as does the majority of the western farm-uprooted migratory workers, neither do their migratory habits resemble those of the Negro potato workers in Central Jersey. Practically all of the Italian families in South Jersey are one-move part-time agricultural migrants who invariably have a home and a permanent residence. They usually make only one move from their point of origin to their point of desti-

nation in New Jersey before returning home at the end of the season.

Even before the last World War, New Jersey potato farmers found it necessary to employ outside or non-resident labor to harvest their crop quickly and efficiently. After 1918 the need for non-local labor became intensified as plant capacity and production increased. The introduction of the two-row mechanical potato digger, moreover, made possible not only larger farms but also considerably accelerated the tempo of the harvest. Between 1930 and 1940 both acreage and output of white potatoes in the Central Jersey region increased sharply — by 68 and 86 percent, respectively. The 35,832 acres planted to this crop and the 5,598,191 bushels harvested in 1940 were only about nine and ten percent, respectively, less than in 1920, the all-time peak. Thus, complete commercialization of potato farming hastened by mechanization, acreage expansion and rapid growth in production have been the major factors responsible for the increased demand for harvest workers in Central Jersey. When the supply and quality of local labor fell behind the increased demand for it, potato farmers in this region began to dip into the Atlantic Seaboard States south of New Jersey and most of the laborers thus recruited were Negroes.

At present, the dependence of the potato growers on migratory labor is so great that the agricultural situation in this region would be severly affected if this source of labor supply were suddenly shut off. Between 4,000 and 5,000 migratory workers are employed for the harvest each year, most of whom are unattached Negroes from the South. A conservative estimate would indicate that at least 75 percent of the labor

used in harvesting, grading, washing and bagging potatoes in this region constitutes non-Negro migrants; the rest represent Negro and white workers from the immediate locality, from Trenton and from other parts of New Jersey.

Southern New Jersey is materially more self-sufficient with respect to the labor needs of its agricultural economy at harvest time than is the potato region of Central Jersey. Probably from 50 to 60 percent of the total volume of labor employed in this area both on the farms and in the packing sheds and canneries, represents migrant or non-local workers. In the neighborhood of 800 to 1,000 Italian families, comprising 4,500 to 5,000 persons, mostly from Philadelphia, Camden and Trenton, make the journey to the farms of South Jersey every summer. Of this number, about 60 percent, or between 2,500 and 4,000 persons actually perform work. Together with the white and Negro migrants from the South and from other parts of the country and of New Jersey who must be provided with shelter facilities during the season, it would seem that no less than 6,000 entirely non-local farm workers are annually employed at the peak of the season in South Jersey. This brings the over-all figure of the number of agricultural migratory workers in the State of New Jersey as a whole to no less than 10,000.

The comparatively large area over which the migrants in South Jersey are employed does not permit anywhere near the same concentration of migratory farm laborers characteristic of the Central Jersey region.

and consequently the problem is not as serious in the former as in the latter area. The principal agricultural labor problem in these counties is reflected in the sub-standard housing and living conditions, lack of adequate year-round employment and earning opportunities for the local farm-labor population itself.

The local farm-labor shortage in Central Jersey is to some extent absolute, reflecting a disturbance in the labor demand and supply equilibrium in an area where the tempo of a specialized and commercial wage-labor-consuming type of agriculture has out-stripped the growth of the local farm wage-working population. It is equally clear, however, that substantially the shortage is relative, resulting from the conditions and requirements of employment or present prevailing in the rural-farming economy which are unacceptable to the available and physically competent workers in the local communities.

The major requirement for workers in potatoes, according to the farmers, is the ability to "stand hard work and heat", and the special condition of such employment which workers must be willing to accept is to work at any hour of the day when needed for the wages offered. The majority of the operators believe that local workers, especially white persons, do not meet the physical requirements, and most of the local workers refuse to accept the conditions of employment. It is this mutual rejection of men and jobs which primarily sets the stage for the appearance of Negro migratory workers in this region.

[illegible]

[illegible] are followed by the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast [illegible] could eliminate labor shortages, while concentration has prevented [illegible] firms insurers in several localities and raising similar objections.

The prevailing use of the labor contractor in central New Jersey [illegible] elsewhere in the States along the Eastern-Atlantic Seaboard is not a manifestation of the lack of public assistance over the transient [illegible] in this part of the country and as opposed to the failure of [illegible] numbers of migratory workers into various areas [illegible] these workers are found to exist. An alternative approach for [illegible] workers stems to excellent success of Canada and other [illegible] from the labor contractor [illegible] is established, a necessary [illegible] of the workers and the only efficient supplier of migrant labor [illegible] the farm operators. The elimination of the labor contractor from the [illegible] will undoubtedly result in higher earnings for the workers [illegible] supplying their operating efficiency in getting their crops.

The public employment service can find it practical, necessary, at least in the early stages of the campaign to organize the [illegible] system, to provide these migratory workers through the labor contractor during the normal process of establishing the public employment service for the labor contracting workers. In an effort consequently that could [illegible] labor contractors be closely scrutinized [illegible] the control and operations of private employment agencies and the conditions under which these concerns are regulated by Federal law.

[illegible]

There is every indication that the State of New Jersey, acting through the Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor will continue its active interest in the problem and implement its 1940 findings with a corrective program of action. This organization provides an effective vehicle through which could and should be tapped the services of the Farm Security Administration, the Federal Bureau of Employment Security, and other Federal agencies in an endeavor to [illegible] [illegible] cooperatively some needed reforms in the migratory-labor field in this State.

[illegible]

Two agricultural areas of major importance in the State of New Jersey have for many years attracted thousands of migratory field workers for the purpose of harvesting a variety of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. One of these is the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the small [illegible] [illegible] is the geographical center. In [illegible] these three counties [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] percent of the State's acreage of [illegible] and produced [illegible] percent of the [illegible] [illegible] in the entire State. The second major area of migration is the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] as [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible]. This [illegible] [illegible] the five counties of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible]. The [illegible] [illegible] and the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] is also an important center of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible].

The [illegible] of [illegible] in the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] early in [illegible] and continues [illegible] the end of [illegible]. During [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] about [illegible] percent of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. In the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] there is a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

are found in small numbers. A survey conducted by the New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor revealed that less than 13 percent of the migrants were families or part of families. The same study showed that 80 percent of the migrants were adult males, 16 percent were women and 4 percent were children under 16 years of age.[1/]

About 90 percent of these Negro migrants come from the States on the eastern seaboard south of New Jersey. At least 75 percent of them coming from the States of Florida and Virginia. Those who come from the deep South make two, three, or more moves to various points up the Atlantic Seaboard following the potato crop as it matures along their routes before arriving in New Jersey. It has been observed, also, that comparatively small numbers continue their potato migration up to Long Island, New York, and even as far as Aroostook County, Maine, shortly following the peak of the potato harvest in New Jersey. Not much is known, however, concerning this phase of their migration.

About 40 percent of these migrants are year-round crop followers with no permanently established home or residence. The others, for the most part, have a substantially long migratory season from early spring to late Fall, returning home for the winter work at odd jobs in town or on the farm or falling back on public relief.

1/ Interstate Migration, Hearings before the Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, H.R., 77th Congress, Third Session, New York City Hearings, Part 1, July 29-31, 1940, p. 87.

In South Jersey, on the other hand, the migrant workers are predominately of the white race, the great majority of them being Italians or of Italian stock. Their children are American-born and many belong to the third generation of families who had been going to New Jersey for seasonal work in agriculture. About 90 percent of these migratory field workers come from the Philadelphia-Camden Metropolitan Area with an appreciable number from Trenton and some of the smaller New Jersey towns near the Delaware River. Chester, Pennsylvania, Newark, New Jersey and even New York City feed this area with seasonal agricultural migrant workers. Smaller but appreciable numbers of both Negroes and whites from the southern States, particularly from Virginia, are found employed during the harvest season, also in this area.

In contrast to the single or otherwise unattached Negro migrants in the Central Jersey potato region, those in South Jersey consist chiefly of family or semi-family units. Women and child workers are found in considerable numbers in this area working alongside the men in harvesting the various vegetables, fruits and berries. A study of 291 Italian migrant families from Philadelphia made by the National Child Labor Committee revealed that of the total number of persons in these families who were employed in farm work in New Jersey in the summer of 1938, one-half were mothers and older children, 38 percent were children under 16 years of age, and only 12 percent were fathers.[1/] The earnings of

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1/ National Child Labor Committee, A Summer in the Country, March 1939, Table I, p. 12.

children in this seasonal farm work is an important factor in the migration of these Italian families to New Jersey. In 1950, the New Jersey State Migratory Commission estimated that 30 percent of the family income of these migrants was earned by children under 16 years of age.[1]

Practically all of the Italian families in South Jersey are now more part-time migrants who invariably have a home and a permanent residence. They usually make only an initial move from their point of origin to their point of destination in New Jersey before returning home at the end of the season. The comparatively few of these families which move more than once, usually go home during the season after harvesting one or two crops and return later to work in another crop which may necessitate a move from one farm to another if the first does not provide a whole season's work. They usually come in the latter part of May and remain until the end of September or the middle of October if they stay over for the cranberry harvest. They are not, at any rate, migrants in the same sense as are the farm-approached migratory workers of the West and for the most part seek permanent relocation. Neither do their migratory habits resemble those of the Negro potato workers in the Central Jersey area who follow the potato season for long distances on the Atlantic Seaboard and a large number of whom are nonresident year-round migrants.

According to the National Child Labor Committee "those who go to New Jersey to do seasonal work may be divided into two parts: those who

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1/ Report of the Commission to Strengthen the Employment of Migratory Children in the State of New Jersey, 1952.

follow agriculture from choice and evince little interest in commercial pursuits, and those who go intermittently, turning to farm work only when employment opportunities in the cities fail."[1] The former group who in the past represented the bulk of the migrants to New Jersey are today in the minority; the latter, or the urban industrial group, constitute at present, by far the majority of the Italian migrants. "When workers originally began to migrate to Jersey, the majority were still close enough to the soil from their experiences in the Old Country to look upon farm work as a way of life. It is evident that this condition no longer exists."[2] Today the families who migrate to New Jersey are predominately a low earning urban group compelled to turn to migrancy in order to supplement their income by seasonal farm work. The heads or other secondary breadwinners of these families are, for the most part, either unemployed, irregularly employed at low wages or on relief or WPA. It is significant that in the 951 families studied by the National Child Labor Committee, 95 percent of the mothers, almost 70 percent of the older children (16-19 years), 95 percent of the younger children (under 16 years), and only about 60 percent of the fathers went to work in New Jersey crops in 1938.[3]

Not strictly agricultural, but contributing in part to the migratory

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1/ National Child Labor Committee, op. cit., p. 8

2/ National Child Labor Committee, op. cit. pp. 8-9

3/ Ibid, Table I, p. 12

supply of farm labor in New Jersey are those migrants who come seeking work in the oyster industry at the southern tip of the State in the vicinity of Port Norris, Bivalve and Reisterville in Cumberland County. These workers are primarily oyster shuckers, but many of them arrive in New Jersey, mostly from Delaware and the western shore of Maryland, before the beginning of the oyster season in September and find employment on the farms of Southern Jersey. From 300 to 500 Negroes make this journey each year, largely crowding in the Negro community near Port Norris called the "Shell-Pile." Related agricultural industries engaged in packing, processing and canning fruit and vegetables, located chiefly in Camden, Salem, Swedesboro, and Bridgeton also attract appreciable numbers of migrants during the summer and fall of the year.

[illegible]

In the past decade, 1930-1940, both acreage and production of white potatoes in the Central Jersey region has increased very sharply: by 44 and 85 percent, respectively. The 38,452 acres planted to white potatoes and the 5,398,191 bushels harvested in 1940 were only about [illegible] and [illegible] percent, respectively, less than in 1900, the all-time peak. This [illegible] rise in production and increase in size of [illegible] in these ten years, significant as they are, is one of [illegible] the degree of specialization to which this region has [illegible] in this essentially labor [illegible]. Since 1930, and to an increasing degree, the relative importance of this region of the State as a potato producer has more than doubled, having produced 85 percent of the State's potatoes in 1940 as compared with only 35 percent twenty years ago. The region's acreage in this crop likewise increased from 41 percent of the State's total in 1920 to 81 percent in 1940. About one-third of this gain in relative status with respect to acreage and production was made in the past decade, 1930 to 1940. Moreover, yields per acre in this region, already the highest in the State, has grown materially during these ten years. More intensive application of labor and capital per unit of land during the decade increased the average of 141 bushels per acre in 1930 to 168 bushels per acre in 1940, or a rise of 19 percent.[2] The intensification of

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(Footnote 1/ continued from page 22)
Other provisions of the law are as follows: a) Special permit required for minors under 16; b) hours of work not to exceed 10 a day; c) no restrictions on work performed outside of school hours in connection with minor's own home and directly for his parent or legal guardian. This bill was sponsored by the Consumers' League of New Jersey, and opposed by the National Child Labor Committee and by the State Board of Agriculture.

[2] See Table 1 in Appendix. Acreage and Production of White Potatoes in Central New Jersey, by Counties, 1919-1940.

[illegible] the season, especially potato [illegible], however, the very practice of many larger farms and the [illegible] [illegible] supplemented the [illegible] of the [illegible]. Thus, complete commercialization of potato farming, [illegible] in mechanization, acreage expansion and rapid growth in production have been the major factors responsible for the increased demand for seasonal workers in [illegible].

It may be assumed, therefore, that the social and economic problems usually resulting from the employment of migratory workers [illegible] have [illegible] been aggravated and been intensified in the absence of [illegible] [illegible]. Official [illegible] interest in the problems of migrant families was stimulated by the discussions and recommendations of the Interstate Conference on Migratory Labor held in Baltimore in [illegible] of 1940.[1] Shortly after this conference an unofficial organization was formed in New Jersey to coordinate activities leading to a proper handling of the migratory labor problem in the State. This organization, called the "New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor", is composed of representatives from various governmental agencies in the State.[2] Most of these agencies [illegible] [illegible] interest in the migratory labor problem in the State.

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[1] See Appendix: "The Baltimore Conference on Migratory Labor".
[2] The N. J. Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor, of which [illegible], Deputy Commissioner of Labor, is Chairman and [illegible], [illegible] of the State Department of Agriculture, is secretary, is composed of the following representatives: [illegible] Department of Institutions and Agencies.

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[illegible]

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[illegible]

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[illegible] The [illegible] of the [illegible] were [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] from the year [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] were [illegible] [illegible] which they were [illegible].

The [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible].

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF MIGRATORY LABOR TO NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURE

The New Jersey State Department of Agriculture has estimated that of the approximately 650,000 acres in all crops in the State, some 320,000 acres, or a little over one-third of the crop acreage, requires the employment of migratory labor in part or in whole for seasonal work. It also has estimated that in terms of man-hours of harvest work the labor of migratory workers amounts to about 12 percent. These overall figures, however, obscure the vital importance of this type of labor in certain selected geographical sections of New Jersey. In the more than 600 commercial potato, fruit and vegetable farms[1] of the State,[1/] these migrant workers represent considerably more than 50 percent of their total manpower from seed. According to the State Secretary of Agriculture, the dependence of these growers on this type of labor is so great that "it was safe to assert that the agricultural economy in this State would be badly affected if this reservoir of mobile manpower for harvesting was not available."[2/] The significance of this appraisal can be readily grasped when one considers a specific commodity: a vitally important segment of New Jersey agriculture - the Garden Jersey tomato crop. This has the right to [illegible] the [illegible] Conference of State Departments of Migratory Labor and the Labor Depart-

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1/ Many of the potato growers employ family farm migrants; so, fruit and vegetable growers employ mainly Negro migrants, or local and Puerto Rican migrants.

2/ Prepared statement of the New Jersey State Secretary of Agriculture submitted to the New Jersey Conference of State Departments of Migratory Labor.

of the Farm Security Administration concerning their current or the migratory labor situation in April and June 1947, respectively.

The findings of the Conference survey indicated that the 27 private growers who were interviewed employed over 1,000 migratory farm workers in 1946. These operators represented about 9[illegible] percent of all the private farmers employing migratory workers in the region and had under cultivation over 32,000 acres of potatoes or about [illegible] percent [illegible] of the total potato acreage in the State. It was revealed also that about 50 percent of these migrants were attracted to the farms primarily for work, but not always available for 30 weeks or more, although more than 60 percent, for eight weeks or more and a little less than 40 percent, for six weeks or more.[3/]

The Farm Security Administration interviewed only 11 full operators, which covered the upper portion of the class to interviewing more from 300 potato growers. In contrast to the Conference survey, this was conducted in the afternoon, in April of the year. The Farm Security Administration study was made in August, the height of the season. The operators who were interviewed had in cultivation a total of 7,000 acres, 55 percent of which was devoted to potatoes - the [illegible] representing about 15 percent of the potato acreage in the Central Jersey area. These 11 farmers employed a total of 450 potato pickers, in-

3/ Mimeographed report submitted by H. S. Sulzer, New Jersey Department of Agriculture to Russell Eutridge, Bureau of the Employment Service Division, Washington, D.C. [illegible] Division of the State of New Jersey, April 29, 1947, p. [illegible].

[illegible] 95 percent of [illegible] were migrants, essentially all migrants from [illegible] of the State.[1/] It is significant that all of the local officers [illegible] were also Negroes. A conservative estimate would indicate that at least 75 percent of the farmers and 85 harvesting workers, foremen and truckers [illegible] in Lincolnville as a whole are migrants. Many migrants come from the interior of the State (to cut [illegible]) Negro and white workers from the immediate locality and from other parts of San Joaquin, particularly Harvest from Tracy.

Farmers in this region were forced to capture many the workers [illegible] the peak period. Almost all of them, if not Greenwood, have [illegible] during the peaks harvest period which lasts about four months [illegible] Lincoln County. Only four of the 41 Labor-employing farmers, or slightly more than one percent of those interviewed, reported that they endeavored to migrants to Lincoln when the survey was made. These four farmers, however, had responsibility, small acreages to cultivate. During the 1938 peaks harvest, the 37 farmers with migrants employed [illegible] an average a station of 31 workers [illegible] an average [illegible] of 22 [illegible]. Number of these farmers or their wife employed in the average [illegible] 22 migrant workers during the peak of the 1940 season. A few of the employed more than 40 migrant workers and one employed as many as 75 peaks harvest hands. These 40 workers and some [illegible] were employed for an average of seven years.

1/ Of the 705 migrant workers only 30 were white. These white migrant workers were mainly from other parts of San Joaquin.

[illegible]

Although the farmer is essentially self-sufficient and produces on his farm most of his foodstuffs, a substantial amount of cash income is the result of [illegible] Normally this is in the [illegible] of the total income of farm employees in this area [illegible] the farm and in the packing sheds and canneries, [illegible] seasonal workers.

In the mid-[illegible] of 800 to 1000 Italian families [illegible] 600 to 800 [illegible] mostly from Philadelphia, Camden and [illegible] were the [illegible] in the [illegible] of South Jersey every [illegible]. Although [illegible] of this migratory population [illegible], it [illegible] that between 500 and 600 may [illegible] in this area [illegible] are employed [illegible] in this [illegible] area of the State [illegible] the peak [illegible] of the season. This [illegible] the estimate of the New Jersey Department of [illegible] 2 that persons [illegible] or more [illegible] are [illegible] migratory workers. [illegible] of [illegible] on the farm 7 days or less [illegible] and [illegible] 7 and 120 days and [illegible] 3 [illegible].

1/ Reported on the basis of 4.5 persons to a family, which [illegible] New Jersey in 1950. See, National Child Labor Committee, [illegible] in the Country, March 1950, Table 1, p. 12.

2/ The proportion [illegible] by the National Child Labor Committee [illegible] in 1950. Ibid., p. 1.

3/ Interstate Migration, [illegible] Before the Select Committee [illegible] Pursuant to H. Res. 198, 77th Congress, 2nd Sess. Part 1, New York City Hearings, July 29-31, 1942, p. 102.

4/ National Child Labor Committee, [illegible], 1950, p. 1, p. 12.

Together with the white and Negro migrants from the South and from other parts of the country and of the factory and must be provided with similar facilities during the season. It would seem that in less than 1000 entirely non-local farm workers[1] are actually employed at the peak of the season in South Jersey and in less than 10,000 migratory agricultural laborers in the State as a whole. The considerably larger area over which the migrants in South Jersey are employed does not permit, however, another, and the more concentration of migratory farm laborers characteristic of the Central Jersey potato region.

Farmers in Burlington County, the largest in the State in terms of acres of tomatoes and in terms of acreage, require an unusual number of workers to pick tomatoes and to harvest sweet corn, peas, beans, tomatoes, and a variety of fruits and berries. From 12 to 15 thousand of this seasonal labor according to various sources of Italian families recruited for the most part by padrones in other types of labor recruiters from the Philadelphia-Camden area. Around 1000 men, women and children are thus employed on the farms of this county. The employment of children is particularly heavy in this county as a whole, and especially in this area in the berry fields and in the canneries near Camden, Riverside and Moorestown. Despite the comparatively large number of Negro migrants in the county, no large concentrations of these workers are found in any one particular locality.

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1) Estimated on the assumption that Italian migrants from Philadelphia and Camden, constituting the other migrants 3/4 or 1.

In Camden, Gloucester and Salem counties, an estimated [illegible] were recruited locally to meet labor needs at vegetable, strawberries and berries, providing about 25 percent of the Farm Field Labor employed during the harvest season representing year-round labor. About 15 percent of the migratory workers are families of Puerto Rican descent and about 10 percent are whites and Negroes from the Jersey shore of New Jersey. A considerable number of intra-state migrants are Blac or Puerto Rican recruited from the surrounding small towns and villages and the curbs for labors are concentrated on the farms where works live. The 1200 acre FLC Farms near Bridgeton in Salem County, for example, employ [illegible] Puerto Rican families from Camden for work in covered brick houses, [illegible] the same time under northern farmers for work in potatoes. Other large commercial farmers in the region such as Frank Dabola and John Stalli use similar work arrangements. The majority of the migrants from Delaware are Negroes who in the past has migrated to New Jersey from the South and has settled in the towns and agricultural communities in the region.

In Cumberland County, migrants are employed both in field work and in the canneries during the current season. The demand for farm workers is predominantly with that for canning and packing house workers because most of the produce is taken directly from the field to the canneries and packing houses. Both in experience, one of the earliest [illegible] migrants, estimate between 300 and 500 families of Puerto Rican and some Negro families from the Eastern Shore. The majority of the [illegible] are single families on a contract basis for cannery and packing [illegible]

[illegible] CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MECHANICAL HARVESTERS IN THE CENTRAL SOUTH JERSEY POTATO REGION

The major reason for the development of mechanical harvesters in the Central South Jersey potato region is the prevailing shortage of local workers in relation to the harvest needs. It is undeniable that to some extent this shortage is absolute and is but another illustration of a disturbance in the labor demand and supply equilibrium in an area where the logic of a specialized and commercial even labor-economies type of agriculture has accompanied the growth of the local farm supporting population. It is equally clear, however, that substantially the shortage is relative, resulting from the conditions and requirements of employment at present prevailing in the potato growing industry but which are independent of the available and physically competent workers in the local communities.

In former years, potatoes were dug on a piece-work basis, the work being continuous and the hours reasonably regular. Local persons worked satisfactorily under these conditions. Harvesting operations, as they are conducted today, however, are irregular and fragmentary. Digging is begun in the early morning and late afternoon and evening, with grading activity extending frequently into the late hours of the night. If weather and market conditions are favorable for digging, operations usually begin at a [illegible] and last until 10 [illegible] or 11 [illegible]. During the late morning and early afternoon usually, or until it overcast, digging potatoes are allowed to accumulate from the pit. Then usually towards 3 p.m. and continuing until dark, grading and bagging

are performed at any time during the day or night, depending on the amount of potatoes which have been picked and are ready to be graded, sacked, and hauled. No potatoes are dug, picked, or graded, however, irrespective of weather conditions, until they are sold. Thus, fluctuations of the market and the conditions of the weather, more than the caprice of the individual farmer, are the basic causes of this system of operation.

When the price of potatoes takes a jump or orders are placed, the operator acts quickly to take advantage of the market, digging commences at short notice and becomes intense, and the product is rushed for delivery to meet buyers' or brokers' orders. Thus, a potato grower may receive an order at, say, 2 p.m. on a given day for delivery to a buyer or broker that same evening. This usually entails a late afternoon digging, picking, and grading. Likewise, a late afternoon order may result in a later evening digging, and the potatoes are picked early the next morning. When the price is low and the market is sluggish, harvesting may be slowed up or discontinued completely and indefinitely. In the summer of 1940, during the period of our survey, many workers reported obtaining as little as one and two days of employment in two and three weeks. Low market prices were largely responsible for this situation.

Local workers apparently are unwilling to cast themselves into this routine of work. This is evident from the replies of the 41 farmers interviewed. With the exception of three of these operators, all stated that they have encountered real difficulties in securing local labor in

the past few years. In fact, most of them were no longer exerting any genuine effort to hire local persons having already concluded that potato harvest work is unacceptable to them. To support this conclusion, they frequently pointed to their experience with local labor, the employment of which all too often resulted in friction, abrupt quittings, trampled fields, sunburned potatoes, and financial losses. Almost three-quarters of the operators interviewed stated that they unqualifiedly preferred not to hire local labor, and indeed were not doing so. Only eight of the 41 farmers expressed a decided preference for local resident workers, but still seven of them employed Negro migrants at the time of the interview, because, they explained, local accepted workers were scarce or could not work. "I'd prefer local help if they were any good", said one of these growers, "for if they're any good they're worth three of the southern help." Only one operator in this small group which preferred local workers was actually exercising his preference because, significantly, the large growers employed migrant labor which enabled him to find competent workers resident in the vicinity. A few operators had no special preference in this respect.

That a considerable number of potato growers had formerly employed local laborers is evident from the findings of the survey made by the New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor in the Spring of 1940. According to this showing, almost 50 percent of the 283 reports received relating to this practice responded in the

affirmative to the question: "Have local or relief laborers been employed in the past?"[1] Most of the operators who replied to this question also gave reasons for no longer employing local labor. It is significant that out of 226 operators whose reasons were recorded, only 34, or 15 percent, stated categorically that "not enough (were) available." The balance of the responses, with few exceptions, indicated indirectly that factors other than absolute scarcity were the governing forces in the non-employment of local labor. Almost 40 percent commented that local labor was either "unsatisfactory", "not dependable", or "not capable of doing (the) work". About 27 percent blamed the WPA for one reason or another for the relative shortage of local labor, and another 10 percent stated that local "workers do not apply for work." The remaining small proportion of operators reported that they were satisfied with their migratory workers and had no comment to make on the local labor situation.[2]

Much blame has been directed against the WPA for siphoning off labor which, under ordinary circumstances, would work in potatoes during the season. Almost one-third of the operators who were interviewed by the Farm Security Administration expressed this opinion.

1/ Interstate Migration, Hearings before the Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, H. Res. 491, 77th Cong., 2nd Sess., Part I, New York City Hearings, July 29-31, 1940, p. 91.

2/ Ibid. p. 91.

The fact remains, however, that a careful analysis of occupations of relief workers on WPA has not been made recently to confirm or refute these charges. A few years ago, an attempt was made to supply farm labor from current relief areas. The effort was not exhaustive, but State relief authorities found that the great majority of the relief clients in New Jersey were either too old or physically incapable of performing the required work, and the rest "just won't do it." 1/

Today, in many quarters, extreme doubt exists whether the WPA is a serious factor in the local farm labor shortage. One of the largest growers in the Central Jersey potato region observed that even if all the able and willing workers on WPA released during the harvesting period to work in potatoes and other crops, the Negro migrants would still be needed in great numbers. Even this potential source of labor supply, inconsequential as it may be, is closed to the farmer for two reasons. First, as the Director of State Financial Aid Commission has stated, it is frequently impractical to transfer relief clients from

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1/ Recently, the Municipal Aid Conferences have endeavored to determine to what extent persons on local relief rolls may be used to supply a part of the demand during the peak for agricultural labor, but since the results of these surveys have not been divulged as yet, it is not known whether or not such a source would be feasible. cf. General Information Furnished to the House of Representatives Special Committee Investigating the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens With Reference to Public Hearings To Be Held In City of New York, July 25-31, 1940, Relating to the N. J. Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor (mimeographed), p. 11

the relief rolls to the fields because the heaviest relief loads are in urban centers too distant from the farms; Second, those who are competent to work in the potato harvest prefer the greater regularity and steadiness of WPA employment and the higher earnings which they make or would make on WPA as compared with the conditions of work and level of earnings in potatoes. Workers are also reluctant to leave WPA for potato harvesting work for fear of losing their WPA jobs or for lack of assurance that they will be reinstated without loss of time and money.

That the growers are not unaware of this situation is reflected in their attitude towards the effect of the WPA on wages and on general labor efficiency in the local communities. Even if the WPA were not currently using most of the unemployed workers in the region, they insist, it has instilled in them unreasonable notions about wages or has otherwise ruined their capacity for efficient farm work. The same operator who expressed himself as seeing no numerical solution to the local labor shortage if WPA released all the competent labor for the potato harvest, summarized his views on this effect of WPA on labor as follows: "WPA pays twice the community rate for one-half of the time. Farms have lost their men to WPA. It's no use now to release them as they aren't any good to work on farms today. It takes 10 WPA men to do one man's job." It is significant to note that this operator had been using migrant harvest labor for more than 10 years - or at least five years before WPA came on the scene. Other farmers who held similar views of WPA were found to have

employed migrants for an average of nine years. Those, therefore, who hold WPA to strict accountability for the dearth of local potato pickers are probably more resentful of WPA because of its effect in raising prevailing wages than in directly causing the labor shortage.

According to the farmers, the major requirement for workers in potatoes is the ability to "stand hard work and heat", and the special condition of such employment which workers must be willing to accept is to work at any hour of the day when needed, for the wages offered. The majority of the operators believe that local workers, especially white persons, do not meet the physical requirements, and most of the local workers refuse to accept the conditions of employment. It is this mutual rejection of man and jobs which primarily sets the stage for the appearance of Negro migratory workers in this region.

Negro migrants accept the conditions of employment in the potato harvest rejected by most of the available local working population. The former work at high speed or stand by, as market and weather conditions determine, accepting the work or inactivity with little or no complaint. Frequently buyers' trucks call at the farm in the late hours of the night or early hours of the morning to pick up sacked potatoes. The Negro migrant, sleeping on the premises, is readily available to pitch in with the loading. In the eyes of the employer, the Negro migrant is the most accommodating of workers, and his immediate availability is a tremendous advantage which cannot be

ordered with local workers who usually do not reside on the farm. One operator, referring to the migrants, summarized this favorite circumstance as follows: "You've got 'em right at your elbow; you don't have to go rounds and lookin' for help."

The "availability for and willingness to work" of a farmer's choice is a factor which weighs heavily in the general preference of New Jersey potato farmers for southern Negro help. Practically all or the potato migrants in the area are housed on or nearby the farms on which they are employed. Almost three out of four farmers who were interviewed preferred Negro migrants for various reasons, but 60 percent of that preferred these laborers chiefly because they were willing to live on the farm and hold themselves in readiness to work at any time of the day and even of the night.

Some growers stated that their preference for the southern Negroes was governed primarily by the superior skill and stamina of these workers. They were "the superior in potato work via the war one of the large growers described them. This, of course, has a solid foundation in fact. These Negro migrants frequently follow the potato season from Florida or the Carolinas northward to New Jersey. They have undoubtedly acquired the skill, experience, and speed which the majority of the local workers cannot match. A few of the operators stated that they were using migrants because they were able to get them to work for less than the local hands would accept. In one operator's opinion, intensive cultivation of potatoes involved greater expenditure

per unit of operation than in former years, and stated "we got to cut costs somewhere." Only about 10 percent of the operators interviewed stated they used the Negro migrants chiefly because no help was available.

The FSA findings reached above respecting the reasons for using Negro migrants roughly approximate those of the survey conducted by the New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor. Out of a total of about 340 responses to the Conference questionnaire "Reasons for Using Migratory Negro Labor", about 27 percent were to the effect that "local help is not available", another 20 percent stated that local labor does not meet the conditions of employment, will not work for prevailing wages and is generally unsatisfactory partly because of the influence of the WPA, and 20 percent declared that Negro migrants were the most satisfactory laborers for potato work because they were "always available and dependable", "willing to work at all hours", and the "only labor available to do type of work required." The balance of the replies were not specific to indicate a preference for this type of labor except that it had become a habit to employ it.[3]

It is an inescapable conclusion, based on the showing of both the FSA and the New Jersey Conference surveys, that under the prevailing organization of the potato economy conducted in the Central Jersey region the employment of non-resident migratory labor is an

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3/ Interstate Migration, op. cit., p. 28.

economic necessity. Potatoes can be planted, cultivated, dug, and partly graded by machine, but it takes manual labor to pick them up after the digging machine exposes them, to market the product and to sack and haul them. In the last analysis, these finishing operations largely determine the monetary returns of the farmer, and it is at these points that the labor problem impinges upon the potato industry.

THE EFFECT OF CHANGES IN THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY ON LABOR REQUIREMENTS AND A REVIEW OF THE LOCAL FARM LABOR SUPPLY IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY.

Rapid and profound changes in the nature of land tenure and farming operations in the last 30 or 40 years has resulted in seasonal requirements of large numbers of farm laborers for comparatively short periods of time in non-mechanized harvesting operations in South Jersey. From an agricultural economy characterized by small, individually owned and operated farms devoted largely to general crops, this farming area of the State has been transformed, for the most part, to one of large scale industrialized and commercially operated farm units. A significant number of them have even taken on a corporate skeine, either directly owning or controlling a substantial amount of crop acreage and generally exercising a dominant influence over agriculture in this part of the State. The Seabrook Farms, located near Bridgeton in Cumberland County, is the outstanding example of corporate farming in South Jersey and represents a veritable "factory in the field".

These changes came at a time when low prices of agricultural products compelled economy of operation and only those individuals and corporations who had relatively easy access to the money and investment markets were able to secure capital for investment in more economical methods of farm production. At the same time, high taxes on land and other fixed charges such as insurance and interest on mortgages accelerated the movement toward central owner-

sale and acquired of farm lands. In some instances investment groups bought up tax certificates and took possession of land when individual operators found themselves unable to buy back tax certificates and taxes liens against their farms. In other areas, knowledge that buyer land for non-payment of taxes and then at public sales in size have offered instance of large accumulated tax arrears, the land was leased by the townships to large operators sometimes at rentals less than taxes. In still other instances, the usual mortgage foreclosure resulted in the leasing of land to banks, insurance companies and other fiduciary institutions to large operators who were in a better position to secure returns on their land investments. Finally, extensive development and improvement of the state's highway system, the construction of bridges and tunnels linking the nearby markets of the metropolitan areas of Philadelphia and New York City also contributed to transforming South Jersey from a self-sufficing type of agricultural economy to the commercialized food factory of the East employing considerable of farm wage-workers during the harvesting and canning season.[1]

Concentration of land in large farms, mechanically operated and commercially managed, has been the prime reason for the increased demand for farm-wage labor during the harvesting and canning season of

1/ Nelson Cardinale, Notes on Agricultural Land in Southern New Jersey, Issue on Responsibility Only in Area, Apr. 19-21, 1938, Office Memorandum, (unpublished); also, for an early study of a land development agency, see L. T. W. Lee, Land Utilization in New Jersey, July, 1939, Bulletin 660, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, New Brunswick, N. J.

the year, but the control exercised by the local canneries and other food processing plants over the type and volume of production of small and middle-sized farms has also contributed to the same result. This is particularly evident in the case of can-house tomatoes which the majority of the farmers in South Jersey grow under contract for such canning companies as Campbell in Camden, Heinz in Salem, Hurff in Swedesboro, Pritchett and Ritter in Bridgeton, Watson in Cedarville and the South Jersey Produce Company in Quinton. Contracting farmers have been compelled to increase their supply of harvest labor in order to meet the time specifications of the canneries.

It is not altogether clear, however, to what extent the increased demand for farm labor resulting from the changes in farm tenure and farm operations discussed above justifies today the employment of the several thousand non-local workers in this area. There is basis for reasonable doubt that these appreciably large numbers of migratory workers employed seasonally on farms and in canneries in southern New Jersey are genuinely needed today. For in this comparatively large agricultural area are found residing several thousand white and Negro families mostly dependent upon precisely this type of work. There are strong possibilities that the migrants may be providing that additional weight of numbers sufficient to depress wages and other conditions of em ployment , if they are not completely impairing the employment opportunities of a sizeable segment of the local working population which at present is already under-employed and economically underprivileged.

In the early stages of the transformation from small-scale general farming to large-scale commercialized and specialty farming, it is possible that a genuine shortage may have existed. Since that time, however, many migrants, especially Negroes from the South but also Italian families from near-by large cities, had come to this part of the State and had settled down permanently, constituting now a substantial part of the local rural farm labor population. Moreover, many former small farm operators, both tenants and owners, have been pushed down the agricultural tenure ladder and today derive all of their cash income either from seasonal day-work on farms during the harvesting period, from work in the canneries, or from odd jobs in the surrounding towns during the off-season. The majority of these seasonal farm and cannery workers reside either in the open country, in small crossroad unincorporated villages, or in the poorer sections of the towns and small cities of southern New Jersey. A considerable number of them are found in Salem, Swedesboro, Glassboro, Millville, Vineland, Bridgeton, Penns Grove, and Paulsboro. They have no direct attachment to any farm but live in sub-standard dwellings which they either rent, if they live in town, or built themselves, if they live in the open country.

Outside of the corporate limits of Glassboro, for example, is located a rural slum settlement of about 200 Negro families who, during the season, are agricultural day-wage laborers and who exist mostly on relief in the off-season. This community at Elsmere, popularly known as "Eighty Acres," was developed by real estate speculators who, through high-pressure salesmanship, managed to sell lots to south-

ern Negroes at very low prices. Today, these families are practically stranded, being handicapped by under-employment and working irregularly at low-paying jobs either on the farm on in nearby towns. A similar unincorporated community known as "Bailey Town," located near Woodstown in Salem County, is a more widely scattered settlement of about 100 Negro families with similar economic disadvantages. A third settlement of similar nature, though less depressed than the preceding two, is known as "Jericho" and is situated near Woodbury. About 125 Negro families reside there supporting themselves by seasonal farm work and by menial odd-jobs in the towns of Woodbury, Wenonah, and Woodbury Heights. About 25 percent of the families are, however, on relief or WPA. How many more similar communities or groups exist in the Pine Area of southern New Jersey is not known, but undoubtedly the above examples do not exhaust the list.

Fewer numbers of farm labor families live in dwellings located on the farm, usually pay no cash rent, receive limited perquisites such as garden privileges and poultry facilities and in return for these privileges offer the farm operator a priority on their labor. They are attached to the farm and enjoy at least a quasi-tenure status as permanent employees. During the crop season they usually work by the day or on a piece-work basis either for the farm operator, who provides the dwelling and other perquisites, or for some other farmers when conditions permit. During the off-season they seek employment in odd jobs on the farm or in the industries located in near-by towns.

A comparatively small proportion of these farm laborers is of the "hired man" variety with the usual economic and social relationship characteristic of this type of status. Such workers are found on the more general and diversified type of medium sized farms where conditions favor year-round employment.

The ranks of these resident wage workers are augmented by the hundreds of small marginal farm operators renting or owning small truck and fruit farms of 10 to 40 acres in size and who are compelled to supplement the small income derived from their own farms from work at day labor on larger farms nearby.

This local labor supply, if properly organized by the public employment service and tapped through this channel by the local farm operators, could probably be made to more adequately meet the seasonal labor requirements of this area. To a considerable degree, the use of migratory workers in South Jersey is but a reflection of the disorganization of the labor market, as it is also a vestige of past hiring practices when a shortage of local labor may have been acute. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that the continued use of Italian migrants, particularly, is a result of the operatorx of the "padrone" or labor contractor who has a vested interest in perpetuating these hiring practices. While a rationalization of the farm labor market may not obviate the use of all migratory workers in the near future, it would undoubtedly reduce their influx into South Jersey to a minimum.

Farm Labor Contracting

a) Central Jersey Potato Region

Surveys of both the Farm Security Administration and of the New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor reveal that the use of the labor contractor in the Central Jersey potato region is widely prevalent. Of the 41 operators who were interviewed by the Farm Security Administration at the height of the potato season in 1940, 34 farmers, or almost 80 per cent, stated that they employed a labor contractor either for purposes of recruiting labor or for undertaking the work, or for both. Whatever his major function, however, the labor contractor acted also as a transportation agent "corralling" the workers at one or more points along the South Atlantic Seaboard, and, for the most part, returning them after the season. Two of the contractors supplied the labor from Trenton and hauled the workers to and from work each day, the other 24 recruited and transported the workers into New Jersey from out of the State.

The 476 Negro migrants who were under the immediate control and supervision of these labor contractors represented 63 per cent of the total number of southern Negroes employed on the 40 farms which used this type of labor exclusively. Thus, 80 per cent of the farmers and 63 per cent of the workers relied either in whole or in part on labor contractors for the work involved in the potato harvest in Central Jersey in 1940. These figures approximate the finding of the New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor which indicated

that of the 323 farmers who employed migratory labor in 1939, 50 per cent had obtained these workers either directly through a labor contractor or through an arrangement which invariably involved the use of a gang boss or leader of a group of workers.[1/] The laborers obtained in this manner represented 64 per cent of the over 4000 migrants employed by the commercial potato farmers in this region that year. The rest found jobs by applying for work directly to the farmer. Among these were "floaters" hired on the spot or previously employed workers who made arrangements to return the following year.

Growers who have 50 or more acres in potatoes definitely favor the labor contract system primarily because its adoption relieves them of all or part of the labor problem associated with the harvest. The shortage of local labor for harvesting operations is by far the major phase of this problem with which they are confronted. The utilization of southern Negro labor is today its temporary solution, the success of which may be attributed largely to the labor contractor. The latter is the intermediary agent between the farmers who represent the demand factor and the workers who constitute the potential supply. While a few growers find time and opportunity during the off-season to

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1/ The cases in which the farmer made "his own arrangement" to recruit southern Negro labor involved correspondence with certain groups which year after year came back to work in his farm or with whom he had a "standing arrangement". Cf., Interstate Migration, Hearings Before the Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, H. Res. 63 and 491, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, Part I, New York City Hearings, July 29-31, 1940, p.88.

recruit personally these workers in the states south of New Jersey, the majority of these must rely on the labor contractor, the professional recruiting agent.

The labor contractor performs two other tasks, both of which are essential for the most efficient employment of this type of migratory labor. By supplying transportation to these workers, he is able to convert a potential labor supply into an actual one and by supervising their work he insures maximum performance both in the field and in the barn where grading and sacking operations are conducted. In addition, he frequently keeps records of each worker's production and hours of work as well as distributing wages, preserving work morale and settling grievances. In many cases he also acts as a moderator to preserve the peace and to control intemperate anti-social behavior of the members of his crew. The grower's role in labor relations is frequently reduced to giving general instructions and paying off the contractor. As one operator expressed it: "We pay only for the finished product; the contractor has all the trouble with the help."

Two methods of labor contracting are open to the farmer. He may contract for the laborers themselves, in which case a labor contractor is ordered to bring a specified number of workers; or he may contract for the harvesting of the crop, in which case the number of workers brought by the contractor is of no concern to the farmer so long as the work is accomplished. In any case, the operator's sole financial obligation is to his contractor. The contract or agreement usually calls for the performance of work involving picking up the potatoes after they

are dug up to the surface of the ground and depositing them into sacks or baskets, hauling from the field to the grading barn, and grading, sacking, and loading the graded sacks on a truck ready for the market. Payment for this work is usually on a per 100 pound graded sack basis and is made by the farmer directly to the contractor.[1/] The contractor, in turn, agrees to pay the worker a portion of this rate for picking and loading plus an hourly rate for grading and bagging.

Of the 26 farm operators who were interviewed and who employed labor contractors in 1940, 20 or about 75 per cent, reported they paid their contractors between seven and eight cents per 100 lb. graded sack of potatoes.[2/] Most of the operators professed ignorance of the rate their contractors were paying the workers, but what information was obtained leads to the conclusion that the rate for picking up 100 pounds of potatoes averages about 3½ cents and for grading, bagging, and loading an additional

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1/ Other arrangements also prevail: Rates for picking and grading are sometimes paid by the farmer directly to the worker, and may be based on a bushel basket of 50 lbs. or on a 5/8 bushel basket of about 35 lbs. Rates for grading are paid always on an hourly basis.

2/ One operator reported paying the contractor six cents a 100 lb. sack for picking and hauling and 25 cents an hour for grading; another reported paying his workers directly at a rate of three cents for two 5/8 bushel baskets (or about 70 lbs.) for picking and 25 cents an hour for grading. The others either gave no information or were not certain of the arrangement.

25 cents an hour or, on the average, about 4½ to 5½ cents for the complete operation.[1/] This would indicate an average differential of about 2½ cents between the rate paid by the farmer to the contractor and that received by the worker from the labor contractor--or a margin of profit for the latter of between 25 and 35 per cent.

Apparently the grower encounters little difficulty in locating prospective contractors. Enterprising pickers or graders who have worked a season or two under a contractor and have observed the privileges and profits derived from labor contracting often become contractors themselves. Once a contractor has proved to be reliable, he is frequently retained by the grower year after year. Several of the growers interviewed stated they have had the same contractor from five to seven years.

Most growers keep in touch with their contractors during the off-season mostly through correspondence but sometimes by personal visits. The contractor, being the seeker of employment for his crew

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1/ Typical arrangements were as follows:

Contractor received 8¢ for graded sack of 100 lbs; worker, 6¢ for complete operation													
"	"	6¢	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	5¢	"	"	"
"	"	4½¢	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3¢	"	"	"
"	"	8¢	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3½¢ for picking & 25¢ an hr. for grading			
"	"	7¼¢	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3¼¢ for picking & 25¢ an hr. for grading			
"	"	8¢	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3½¢ for picking & 20¢ an hr. for grading			

and desiring to be sure of his job, writes the more frequently, but the operator usually responds in early summer advising the contractor of the approximate date he wishes the crew to be on hand. A comparatively few operators instruct the contractor as to the actual number and type of workers to bring.

The contractors, as the large majority of the other migrant workers, are Negroes from Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina and Virginia. Some of them are professional contractors with regular contracting routes operating from Hastings, Florida, or from Meggett, South Carolina up the Atlantic Seaboard. Others restrict their activities only to the potato area in New Jersey. Crews are assembled by the contractor either from among friends and relatives at home, workers solicited along the route or from among those found in New Jersey after arrival. One or all of these methods may be used to build up a crew. Some contractors bring the same workers each year or as many as will come again, while other deliberately select an entirely different crew each year. A number of labor contractors own and operate their own trucks in which the workers are transported, others arrange for labor haulers to transport their crews, while still others arrange to meet their workers on locations in New Jersey. Whatever the transportation arrangements are, the worker usually pays the charges both ways. In only a few cases, it was found, does the farm operator advance transportation costs to the contractor; when he does, the amount is fully deducted later from wages.

Growers, as a rule, wait until the beginning of the harvest before

announcing the rate of payment. A number of the farmers interviewed, stated that they had agreed with the contractor to continue the same rate in 1940 they paid in 1939, but the majority of the contractors do not learn the rate until they arrive at the farms. The rate paid to the contractor in the past few years has not varied much so that he knows, within certain limits, what to expect. Nevertheless, the uncertainty of the specific rate he himself will receive prevents him from stipulating, before the start of the journey, the precise rate of wages he will pay his workers.

While the labor contract system is almost universally embraced by the operators, it isaccepted by the workers grudgingly for it is capable of operating to their disadvantage. The potato laborers have little or no voice in determining the wage rate and the margin spread between the employer's price and the contractor's rate. In comparison to the risks the labor contractor assumes and the services he offers, his margin of profit is exorbitant. In any event, whatever the margin of profit, it is made at the expense of the worker more than at the expense of the operator. Were the contractor eliminated from the picture the earnings of the workers would be increased appreciably—possibly by 25 per cent.

b) South Jersey

More than half of the migratory workers of Italian descent who work on South Jersey farms during the harvesting season are recruited by labor contractors or "padrones".[1/] The others find work there through

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1/ National Child Labor Committee, A Summer in the Country, March 1939, p. 10.

their own efforts, through friends, and relatives or are recruited directly by farmers themselves who, during the winter, go to the cities of Philadelphia, Camden, or Trenton seeking farm workers. First-year workers who are not familiar with South Jersey naturally depend more upon labor agents for farm employment than do those who have had several years experience in the work. Agents recruiting labor for South Jersey farmers are of two general types: a) the resident farm foreman and b) the resident or non-resident "padrone." Both of these agents are themselves frequently Italians or of Italian descent.

The first type usually resides the year-round on a farm in New Jersey and recruits seasonal laborers only for the farmer for whom he is employed as a foreman. In the winter, this foreman-recruiting agent makes one or several trips to Philadelphia or Camden or to any other comparatively large city where in the past he may have resided and selects, either directly or through friends, families for the coming season in South Jersey. Just prior to the opening of the harvesting season, he takes the farmer's truck and transports the families from their homes to the farm. Most of these agents not only supervise the work of these families but frequently keep records of hours worked and wages earned as well as engaging in the harvesting work themselves.

The second type of agent, the "padrone", is a professional labor contractor and is the major supplier of Italian farm labor for the South Jersey harvest. Some of them live in the small towns and cities located in the farming regions of South Jersey and draw their clientele from

these centers as well as from Philadelphia, Chester, Camden, and Trenton. Others live mainly in Philadelphia, many of them have trucking businesses, and draw most of their labor from the Italian working districts of South Philadelphia. The "padrones" furnish labor for either a single large grower or for several small farmers. Their object is to have a mobile supply of labor willing and ready to go when and where needed. They are only casually workers but have general supervision of the work in the fields, often employing storehouses for this purpose. Besides furnishing transportation to and from the farms, they also carry workers from farm to farm at the expiration of a contract and in some instances operate commissaries. In recent years the "padrones" have assumed the role of arbiters in cases of dispute and disagreement between farm operators and workers.

Transportation charges are paid by the farmer to the contractor supplying transportation on a per capita basis. Fares are usually paid by the farmer directly to the workers, but in some instances bulk payments are made to the "padrone" who, after subtracting his fees, pays the wages to the worker. It has been reported, also, "that frequently the padrones make advances to workers during the winter season while they are living in the city with the understanding that they will join his gangs for work on farms during the summer."[1/]

1/ Nelson Cruikshank, Notes on Agricultural Labor in Southern New Jersey Based on Reconnaissance Trip to Hope, Indiana, [illegible], pp. 12-13 (unpublished report of the Farm Security Administration.)

There is no question but that employee types and business sector or labor contracting pressure may tend to account least or no seasonal labor supply at a time when it is highly important to harvest and have crops available. Moreover, it shifts many of the labor supervisory problems from the shoulders of the operator to those of the "producer". The latter, in turn, cannot a profit from the system. Therefore, from a social social viewpoint and from the economic interests of the seasonal industries, however, the system is uncontrolled and unmanageable. The operations, in some cases, think in an influx of unskilled labor into communities where there is already much underemployment and unemployment among the local working population. Being unacquainted and unsophisticated by the local laws is no way to call on functional responsibility for the conditions they make or creation worse, amount of work, housing or living conditions. It has been observed that "the under-estimation of the labor supply they may, in a very great extent, determine the seasonal and functional area. By withholding information concerning the amount of assistance or by reporting them to others from very reliable sources, they may influence the amount of outside workers to a very degree, or other the economy."[1] Because these labor contractors seldom have acquired a vested interest in the localities, they are largely responsible for permitting the use of migrant labor in southern New Jersey.

1/ Rural Migrant Labor Conditions, op. cit., p. 36

PROPOSALS FOR THE REGULATION AND BETTERMENT OF MIGRATORY FARM LABOR IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

The social and economic problems created by the presence of 1,000 to 3,000 migratory agricultural workers during the summer and early fall months in the Central Jersey potato region has not the full recognition of the State and local officials. In a brief presented to the House Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, the New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor stated the position of the State on the migrant labor problem, as follows: "....it is felt that the States through various agencies must recognize the problem and provide for proper control and regulations which become all the more necessary because of the increasing growth of the interstate character of the movement" which is bound to have "a potentially adverse effect on the economic life of the State (of New Jersey) if proper measures are not taken at this time."[1/] By no means all, but an appreciable number of farm operators themselves also consider that some measures of regulation and control of the migratory labor situation in the potato region of the State appear necessary. Some of them believe that too large a number of itinerant workers are entering the State in relation to actual labor requirements for potato picking; others realize that many of the migrants represent an undesirable element, particularly from the stand-

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1/ Interstate Migration, Hearings before the Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, H.R., 77th Congress, 3rd Sess., New York City, July 29-31, 1940, p. 81.

point of health. A few admit that housing, health and sanitary facilities provided are not what they should be. It is significant, however, that even these growers are fearful that any ruling or regulation, however desirable, may curtail or interfere with the present free flow of itinerant labor into the region. This fear, at present, is the most formidable barrier to the introduction of a planning and action program designed to bring under control and regulation the social and economic problems associated with the influx of migratory agricultural workers into central New Jersey.

1) Organization of the Labor Market

Assuming it is not possible now nor in the immediate future to recruit sufficient numbers of local workers in New Jersey to adequately and efficiently harvest the potato crop, and that recourse to outside labor will continue to be necessary, it would seem that one of the first tasks should be to rationalize the interstate labor market along the South-Atlantic Seaboard. Recruiting and placement operations peculiarly fitted to meet labor requirements of a commercialized agriculture along lines now followed by the Texas and Arkansas State employment services would eliminate labor shortages, avoid concentrations and over-supply of farm laborers in certain localities and reduce aimless migration. In order to accomplish this exchange of information, labor clearance and other forms of cooperation will be necessary among the public employment services of the States along the seaboard. Each State employment office should collect and exchange with

year such basic data as number of acres planted to labor-employing crops, rainfall and insect menaces, estimates of production, seasonality of the crops, local labor available and estimates of the number of migratory workers needed to complete harvest operations.

Seasonal labor with its migratory tendencies presents a special problem which can be handled only by a mobile and flexible farm placement service. Field men must be engaged to locate and direct such workers from one region to another as the crops mature along the eastern seaboard. This calls for knowledge as to the seasonal agricultural activities along the seaboard, routes of migration, time spent by migrants in each region and the numbers required in each localities. The more or less regular succession of the potato harvest as well as that of other crops along the Atlantic Seaboard from Florida to New Jersey provides an excellent opportunity for the public employment services of the States to reach and direct the movement cooperatively of the approximately 30,000 migrant farm workers who follow these harvest.

While it seems to be the traditional practice of public employment agencies to have little or nothing to do with the conditions of employment and the living quarters provided by farm employers, yet these agencies can do much to improve them indirectly by supplying workers information on wages, working conditions and available shelter facilities before they are referred.

c) Control of Labor Contracting

The prevailing use of the labor contractor in Central New Jersey and elsewhere in the States along the South-Atlantic Seaboard is both a manifestation of the lack of public control over the farm-labor market in this part of the country and an impetus to the influx of exaggerated numbers of migratory laborers into regions where local labor shortages are known to exist. An efficient farm recruiting and placement service stands an excellent chance of weaning away these farm migrants from the labor contractor, who is considered as a necessary evil by the workers, and the chief supplier of itinerant labor by the farm operators. Unlike the illiterate and non-English speaking Mexican agricultural migrants in Texas who also work under labor contractors, most of the Atlantic coast Negro mobile laborers speak and read the English language, and, if assisted and directed, can find their own jobs. Nevertheless, the public employment agencies may find it practical, at least in the early stages of the campaign to organize this labor market, to recruit even these migrants through the labor contractor.

That public officials are aware of the evils of the labor contract system is evident in the following appraisal of it by the Deputy Commissioner of Labor: "The many injustices, potential and existing that are and can be suffered by the workers at the hands of unscrupulous contractors dictates the removal of this system in favor of placement by existing State employment agencies, whose facilities would be

readily extended to perform this desirable service."[1] The elimination of the labor contractor from the labor market will undoubtedly result in higher wages for the workers without impairing operating efficiency or reducing output. It should be noted, however, that any public agency which aims to reduce the importance or completely eliminate the labor contracting system must assume not only the labor contractor's function as a labor recruiter but also his function as a transportation agent. The contractor's function as a labor foreman can be assumed without difficulty either by the grower himself or by another individual hired for this purpose.

During the gradual process of substituting the public employment system for the labor contracting system, it is highly desirable that local labor contractors be placed under State laws regulating the conduct and operations of private employment agencies, and those operating in interstate commerce be regulated by Federal law. Agents engaged in recruiting and transporting migratory farm workers from one State to another should be licensed and bonded, be prohibited from pursuing specified anti-social employment practices and be made to assume liability for the safe conduct of the workers back to the point of origin after the season is completed. Such recommendations

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1/ Testimony of C. George Krueger, Deputy Commissioner, N. J. Department of Labor, Hearings before the Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, H. Res. 63 and H. Res. 491, New York City Hearings, July 29-31, 1940, p. 71

have already been proposed by a number of New Jersey public officials as well as by the Seventh National Conference on Labor Legislations.[1]

3) Improvement in Housing and Health Facilities

Better housing for migrants is urgently needed in this region. Housing accommodations for migratory workers here are generally substandard and in many cases wretched. In fact, practically all of the shelter facilities which exist for them are not meant to house people. On most farms one or more of the barnyard buildings are used by the migrants for living and sleeping quarters—barns, potato grading sheds, tool sheds, garages, wagon houses, corn cribs, chicken coops and other make-shift shelters. Overcrowding occurs frequently enough to be designated as characteristic, and such crowded living conditions are detrimental not only to health but, where strangers share quarters, foster unsavory sex relations which frequently result in loss of self-respect and family demorilization.

Very few farmers have taken the initiative to construct special shacks or cabins or other forms of housing for their migrant potato harvest hands. This situation is particularly unfortunate because farmers are most desirous that these seasonal workers reside on their farms and always be "on tap" for work.

1/ Cf. Testimony of C. George Krueger, Deputy Commissioner, N. J., Department of Labor and of Major C. F. Scheeffel, Deputy Superintendent of the N. J. State Police, Op. cit., pp 71, 83, and 84; also the model draft bill to regulate private employment agencies engaged in interstate commerce ("Employment Agency Act of 1940") prepared by the Seventh National Conference on Labor Legislation.

Toilet, health and other sanitary facilities are either inconveniently located, poor, inadequate for the demands which are made upon them or totally absent. The law in New Jersey instructs each local Board of Health to enforce local regulations and the regulations of the State Sanitary Code with respect to private wells, sources of water supply and in regard to the construction, location and maintenance of privies, cesspools and the like. Most of the boards of health in the rural townships, however, have only limited funds and personnel and cannot make frequent inspections of sanitary facilities.

The operators' views of the living quarters for their migratory workers are less critical than herein recited and reveal an inconsistent approach to this problem. Practically all of them stress the economic necessity for employing migratory labor but few of them provide adequate housing and other essentials and conveniences of living for these indispensable workers. Of the 40 operators who were interviewed and who employed migrants, 38 provided some form of housing free of charge to their workers, and 35 of these farmers stated that they considered the facilities thus provided as satisfactory. The housing consisted either of dilapidated labor cabins, old houses slightly reconditioned for use of seasonal laborers or, for the most part, of barnyard buildings originally meant for purposes other than human habitation.

The farmers' judgments respecting the character and quality of their labor housing are based more on rationalizations than on sober and objective appraisal of the situation. The almost universal opinion among them is that the Negro migrant doesn't desire nor appreciate clean, comfortable and convenient living quarters. Neither could he be trusted, they believe, to make proper use of improved housing facilities were these furnished. Several farmers pointed to their experience to substantiate these views, declaring that the improvements which they introduced in past years were negated after a season or two and "things were again in rack and ruin." Another argument frequently used by the farm operators, and still subject to verification, is that the migrants' permanent homes are invariably no better and even inferior to their temporary quarters in New Jersey.

Whatever the arguments, some of which are open to serious doubts regarding their validity while others seem to beg the question, the fact remains that no extensive improvements in housing for migratory workers is planned in the immediate future or even contemplated in the distant future by the labor-employing farmers in the Central Jersey potato region. It is clear, therefore, that the logic of events dictates that in the public interest the appropriate government agency lend its cooperative assistance in the solution of this problem. Government loans or subsidies to individual farmers for

the construction of needed units on their own farms to house the large number of migratory workers employed by them will involve a very large financial outlay and, in all probability, be out of proportion to the seasonal character of the housing problem. An alternative plan would be a government-financed group housing project of a seasonal character to accommodate as many migrants as possible for about four consecutive months of the year at one central location. A camp or community for migratory agricultural workers financed by the Farm Security Administration fits this order and appears at this time to be the most practical and immediate way of meeting the issue.

4) Construction of an FSA Camp

A Farm Security Administration migratory farm-labor camp will not only immeasurably improve housing, health and sanitary conditions of the migrants, solve the housing shortage problem of the growers and promote the welfare of the community at large, but will also help to establish machinery for a rational system of recruiting and placing labor within the region itself. A public employment office or offices located on the camp premises will go a long way in dispelling the fears of the farm operators that the presence of a camp will introduce complications obstructing the supply of labor at times when it is needed. It will also bring into equilibrium the labor demand and labor supply on each farm and regularize employment, now extremely intermittent, by introducing flexible methods for the use and exchange of labor among farmers employing workers. The aforesaid improvements

in the organization of the farm-labor market may well result in a reduction of the total number of migratory workers needed in the region as a whole as well as in providing fuller employment and increased earnings for those already there.

An FSA camp, moreover, can lend valuable assistance to the State Health Department which in the past year or two has performed an important public service in an effort to control the health and sanitary conditions of the migrants in this region. In its examination of about 2500 Negro migrants in 1939, the Health Department found that, as a group, their health was poor—at least as far as the prevailance of syphilis among them was a reflection of it.[1/] In terms of serological laboratory reports, about 35 percent of the migrants were found positive—32 percent of the males and 42 percent of the females.[2/] The persons who were discovered to have a positive or doubtful blood test were examined again and of this number a total of 786 were diagnosed as syphilitic. Thus about one out of every four of the Negro migrants were found to have syphilis and one out of every three of these syphilitics, a diagnosis revealed, had infectious stages

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1/ Of the 3,021 persons who were blood tested, only 73 were white, the rest were Negroes. Of the 2,948 Negroes, only 390 were residents of New Jersey, the others came from 18 different States of which Florida, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia were more frequently represented in this order.

2/ These percentages include the 390 Negroes who were local or State residents.

of the disease.[1] Those that were afflicted with the disease were given injections before they returned to their homes with patient referral forms indicating the exact nature of their ailment and the treatments given to date. Facilities that would be provided by a camp in the region would be of inestimable worth to the State Health Department in enlarging the scope and advancing the thoroughness of its work in this direction.

5) Stabilization of Production and Employment

Intermittent employment and low weekly earnings experienced by potato pickers are fundamentally a result of irregular production schedules. Since this irregularity of production is itself a product of market fluctuations, efforts should be made to minimize the influence of market price and market demand on production and employment. While it is self-evident that growers must sell when the market is favorable, it does not necessarily follow that this entails workless days, on the one hand, and feverish activity and diggin on short notice on the other. Potatoes in New Jersey, it is maintained, cannot be stored as long a time as those in Oregon or Maine, for example, but the possibility of establishing "dug-outs" or other storage places in order to regularize production and work is worthy of consideration.[2]

1/ See statement by the W. J. Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor prepared for the House of Representatives Special Committee Investigating the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, pursuant to H. Res. 63 and H. Res. 491 (New York City Hearings, July 29-31, 1940).

2/ Memorandum from James E. Sidel, Field and Legislative Director of the National Child Labor Committee to Russell J. Eldridge, Director of the New Jersey State Unemployment Compensation Commission.

This is a technical problem for which probably no immediate solution could be expected, but exploration along this line is highly advisable in view of the potential advantages inherent in the plan both for farmers and potato workers.

Stabilization of production and employment resulting in steadier and higher earnings would encourage local labor to seek and accept work in the potato harvest more readily than is the case at present. The corollary of this much sought-after desideratum, the achievement of which requires long-range planning, will be to diminish the prevailing dependence of the potato farmer on migratory labor. More immediately, however, a thorough canvass should be made of the NYA, the relief rolls, and other sectors of the labor market in order to discover to what extent employable and competent persons in near-by local communities could be used in larger numbers to meet a part of the demand for harvest labor during the potato season. To insure at least partial success in attracting local labor to work in the potato harvest, it would probably be necessary and equitable to (a) assure bona fide relief recipients that they would be returned to the relief rolls immediately after the potato harvest and (b) to remove the prevailing mental hazards of these and other workers that they would suffer a loss in earnings by accepting such employment. The latter could be achieved by hiring fewer pickers per acre, by paying rates which would permit workers to earn a fair daily living wage and by providing other farm work during slack days of the harvest.

4) The Continuation of the Work of the New Jersey Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor

There is every indication that the State of New Jersey, acting through the Conference of State Departments on Migratory Labor, will continue its active interest in the problem and implement its findings with a corrective program of action. The Conference has already recommended the following measures for the control of agricultural migration:

1. Organization of similar conferences in States along the Atlantic Seaboard, affected by the travel pattern of migrants, with provisions for regional and general meetings.

2. Working agreements between Federal agencies and State conferences to eliminate duplication of effort and to strive for singleness of purpose.

3. Federal aid involving cooperation of Federal agencies in the work of the State conferences, regarding personnel, equipment, research and records, and other forms of aid relating to certification of minors, educational facilities, standard for housing and health, and the physical interpretation of these standards.

4. Preventative measures to check increase in the number of migrants who may be attracted to agricultural areas because of relatively improved and more agreeable and convenient conditions.

5. Utilization of local labor in preference to migrant labor.

6. Assure bona fide relief recipients their return to the relief rolls when seasonal work in harvesting farm products has been completed.

Through its private agency co-ordinating committee, the Conference reaches all private and social groups affected or interested in the migratory labor situation in New Jersey. Its Federal agency coordi-

ming committee is instructed to cooperate "with the various Federal departments and agencies, as well as those from other States who may be concerned with the problems in New Jersey." Other committees of the Conference are responsible for policy making, conducting investigations and studying health and housing.

This organization provides an effective vehicle whose power could and should be meshed with those of the Farm Security Administration in an endeavor to launch and carry through cooperatively any needed reforms in the migratory labor front in this State. This Conference may well serve as a model for other States along the Atlantic Seaboard which are concerned with problems affecting migratory agricultural workers, farmers employing them, and communities harboring them.

PROBLEM AND SUGGESTED PROGRAM IN SOUTH JERSEY

The major farm-labor and social economic problems in the rural counties of South Jersey do not center around an acute scarcity of local labor nor even around the working and living conditions of the migratory workers, though the latter leave much to be desired. Despite the approximately 6,000 migrants who find seasonal employment in South Jersey, local labor is adequate to meet the needs of the farmers and of the canneries probably up to 75 percent of requirements during the harvest and canning seasons. The South Jersey agricultural area is so large that the migrants are, for the most part, swallowed up by the country side. In contrast with the Central Jersey potato region, no large concentrations of migratory seasonal harvest workers are to be found in this part of the State.

Earlier migration of southern Negroes and of Italian farm labor families from the metropolitan areas of Philadelphia, Camden, and other large cities of the North into this part of New Jersey appears to have built up a substantial local labor supply when these workers settled down permanently instead of returning to their place of origin. To these numbers must be added the hundreds of small farm operators who supplement their annual income with wages earned at day work on the larger commercially-operated farms. It is this local farm-labor population, constituting as it does the major labor reservoir for the seasonal field harvesting operations and for the equally seasonal type of work provided by the canning and other food processing establishments, which primarily is in need of social and

economic rehabilitation.

The major social-welfare offensive in this area should be directed, therefore, toward a program designed to increase the employment opportunities and to improve the housing conditions of the farm-labor population permanently resident in this agricultural area of New Jersey. To advance its work opportunities, more effective organization of the local labor market and control of the migratory labor influx are the first steps to be taken. An expanded and specialized farm placement service is urgently needed in this predominantly agricultural area of the State. Licensing of farm-labor contractors, moreover, would not only eliminate questionable recruiting and hiring practices but will also serve as a check on the numbers of non-local farm laborers who are brought into the area each year for harvesting operations. Also, now that the State has on its statute books a child labor law applicable to agricultural pursuits, the job of strict enforcement of its provisions lies ahead. Sufficient funds and personnel should be made available to prevent the law from becoming a dead letter.

Improved housing for the locally resident seasonal farm and cannery workers is also a pressing need. Most of them now live in sub-standard dwellings located either in the open country, in small crossroad unincorporated villages or in the poorer sections of towns. Typical rural slum settlements are such Negro communities as "Eighty Acres" at Elsmere (Gloucester County), "Bailey Town" near Woodstown

(Salem County) and "Jericho" near Woodbury. Further south in Cumberland County, at points along the Maurice River and Delaware Bay, particularly in the vicinity of Port Norris, Bivalve and Heislerville, about 600 families, practically all Negroes, are engaged during the oyster season in shucking, processing and packing oysters. Most of these people, however, are primarily farm laborers. Their housing conditions are particularly wretched. A housing program in terms of group-labor homes similar to those introduced in Southeast Missouri is worthy of immediate consideration in several regions of South Jersey.

APPENDIX A

The Baltimore Conference on Migratory Labor
(Feb. 12-13, 1940)

This Conference was sponsored by the labor commissioners of each of the four States of Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. About 120 delegates and unofficial observers who attended represented various State agencies, labor and consumer organizations and State and national public welfare bodies as well as a number of Federal Government agencies such as the American Red Cross, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Farm Security Administration in the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the Children's Bureau, the Division of Labor Standards and the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U. S. Department of Labor, the Federal Social Security Board, the U S Office of Education and the U. S. Works Progress Administration.

Various topics relating to the migratory agricultural labor problem were presented and discussed. The national scope of the problem was stressed throughout the Conference. Recommendations adopted were as follows:

> That an up-to-date survey of the migratory labor problem, including the actual needs for migratory labor, be made in each of the 4 States by the appropriate agency, or agencies, assisted where necessary by Federal agencies;
>
> That ways and means be devised, through cooperation with farm groups and individual farmers, to eliminate the use of migratory labor as much as possible by the employment of local labor;
>
> That the same opportunities and services for education, school attendance, health, relief, housing, and sanitation be made available for migratory labor families as are available to the residents of the communities in which they work;
>
> That these be the responsibility of the community and the State, with Federal aid to assure equal opportunities and services for migrants (as well as for residents) where State and community resources are insufficient, provided that Federal aid be made available on condition that the States and communities receiving aid agree not to discriminate between residents and migrants;

That housing and sanitary regulations be adopted, or made applicable to, the shelter of migratory and seasonal labor, similar to those existing in the more progressive States for tourist camps;

That adequate appropriations and personnel be made available to the appropriate State agency to enforce these regulations;

That each State study the administration of existing laws as applied to migrants, with a view to removing inconsistencies, overlapping jurisdictions and filling in the gaps;

That relief workers who accept temporary jobs be assured that they will immediately be restored to the relief rolls when their jobs are over;

That laws regulating employment agencies be amended so as to apply to contractors for agricultural labor and to make the control effective;

That the State Employment Services develop machinery for estimating needs, and for recruiting and routing labor.

The Conference further recognized that the conditions surrounding employment of children in industrialized agriculture, in which most migratory child labor is found, are vastly different from those of children working on their parents' farms. It, therefore, recommended, also, a 14-year minimum age for employment in industrialized forms of agriculture, with adequate certification of age, for the protection of the employer and the child. (This was not to include the work of children for their parents on their parents' farms.)

The Conference further recommended: That State conferences on migratory labor to be called by the labor Commissioners to develop means of putting agreed-upon standards into effect; that the sponsors of the Interstate Conference on Migratory Labor constitute themselves a committee, with added membership from the Conference, to follow up its recommendations and to reconvene the conference from time to time.

APPENDIX B

ACREAGE AND PRODUCTION OF IRISH (WHITE) POTATOES
IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY, BY COUNTIES, 1910-1940 1/

COUNTY	1910		1920		1930		1935		1940	
	Acreage	Production	Acreage	Production	Acreage	Production	Acreage	Production	Acreage	Production
Mercer	5,479	556,729	8,168	1,173,562	5,340	669,251	8,315	1,570,607	10,201	1,637,048
Middlesex	4,845	475,807	6,468	867,218	4,960	667,077	8,434	1,504,347	10,052	1,686,063
Monmouth	14,784	1,893,523	24,859	4,177,438	11,005	1,666,628	14,355	2,457,723	15,579	2,275,080
Total, 3 counties	25,108	2,926,059	39,495	6,218,218	21,305	3,002,956	31,104	5,532,677	35,832	5,598,191
Total, State	72,991	8,057,424	82,533	10,318,306	36,963	4,733,520	51,964	8,285,780	50,357	7,439,827
Percent, 3 counties are of State total	34.4	36.3	48%	60%	57.6	63.4	59.8	66.7	71.2	75.3

1/ U. S. Census of Agriculture.

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